

PROGRAM GUIDE SYSTEM WITH ADVERTISEMENTS

Background of the Invention

This invention relates to interactive television program guides, and more particularly, to techniques for presenting advertising to users of such television program guides.

Cable, satellite, and broadcast television systems provide viewers with a large number of television channels. Viewers have traditionally consulted printed television program schedules to determine the programs being broadcast at a particular time. More recently, interactive electronic television program guides have been developed that allow television program information to be displayed on a viewer's television.

Interactive program guides are typically implemented on set-top boxes. Such program guides allow users to view television program listings in different display formats. For example, a user may instruct the program guide to display a grid of program listings organized in a channel-ordered or a time-ordered list. Users may also search and sort program

listings by theme (e.g., movies, sports, etc.) or by
title (i.e, alphabetically). A user may obtain
additional information for a program by placing a
highlight region on a desired program listing and
5 pressing an "info" key. The user may purchase a pay
program from the program guide or may set a reminder
for a future program by placing the highlight region on
a program listing and pressing an "OK" key. Some
systems allow the user to select a program for
10 recording by placing the highlight region on a program
listing and pressing a "record" key.

Although interactive program guides
facilitate the user's task of locating programming of
interest, it would be desirable if more information and
15 more options were available to the user. For example,
it would be desirable if advertisements were available
in the program guide to give the user access to more
information and services.

It is therefore an object of the present
20 invention to provide an interactive television program
guide system that provides advertising on various
program guide screens.

It is also an object of the invention to
provide an interactive television program guide system
25 with interactive advertising.

It is also an object of the invention to
provide ways in which a user may navigate to various
program guide advertisements.

Summary of the Invention

30 These and other objects of the invention are
accomplished in accordance with the principles of the

present invention by providing a system having an interactive television program guide that provides advertising on various program guide screens. Banner advertisements may be displayed above and below a
5 program listings region. The user may scroll the program listings in the program listings region by using a cursor key to move a highlight to the upper or lower banner advertisement and by then activating the cursor key another time.

10 Advertisements may contain text, graphics (including animation), and video. Advertisements may also contain a list of program options.

Embedded advertisements may be provided in the program listings region. The program guide may
15 display such embedded advertisements immediately adjacent to a related program listing. For example, a program advertisement for "Seinfeld" may be placed immediately adjacent to a program listing for the channel NBC, which is the channel on which the program
20 "Seinfeld" is scheduled to appear.

Panel advertisements may be provided adjacent to the program listings. A highlight may be navigated between the program listings in the program listings region and the panel advertisements using dedicated
25 remote control navigation keys (e.g., keys labeled "A," "B," and "C"), each of which is associated with a particular region of the screen (e.g., one of the panel advertisements or the program listing region.) This type of arrangement may also be used to navigate to
30 banner advertisements.

Another way in which to navigate to the panel advertisements is to use remote control cursor keys.

If embedded advertisements are provided in the program listings region, they may be used as navigational bridges between the program listings region and the panel advertisements. The highlight may also be
5 navigated from the program listings region to the panel advertisements without using such navigational bridges if desired.

Further features of the invention, its nature and various advantages will be more apparent from the
10 accompanying drawings and the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a diagram of a system in which an interactive television program guide is implemented in
15 accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a diagram of a system similar to the system of FIG. 1 showing how servers may be located at network nodes in accordance with the present invention.

20 FIG. 3 is a diagram of an illustrative program guide screen containing panel advertisements and a program listings region in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 4a is a simplified plan view of an
25 illustrative remote control in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 4b is a simplified plan view of another illustrative remote control in accordance with the present invention.

30 FIG. 5 is a diagram of an illustrative program guide screen containing advertising information

FIG. 6 is a diagram of illustrative
advertising options in accordance with the present
5 invention.

10 FIG. 8 is a diagram of an illustrative
program guide screen containing panel advertisements
and a program listings region having an embedded
advertisement that may be scrolled with the program
listings in accordance with the present invention.

20 FIG. 10 is a diagram of an embedded advertisement arrangement in which the user may page through the program listings without disturbing the position of the advertisement in accordance with the present invention.

30 FIGS. 12a and 12b are diagrams illustrating
how a user may navigate a highlight to selectable logos
in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 19 is a diagram of an illustrative program guide screen that may be provided when the user

selects a pay-per-view program-related advertisement in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 20 is a diagram of an illustrative program guide screen with banner advertisements (upper screen), an illustrative screen that may be provided when a pay-per-view program-related advertisement is selected (middle screen), and an illustrative screen that may be provided when a non-pay-per-view program related advertisement is selected (lower screen) in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 21 is a diagram of an illustrative program guide screen containing a program listings region with an embedded advertisement that has been automatically positioned immediately adjacent to an associated program listing in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 22 is a diagram illustrating how a program guide in accordance with the present invention may provide a program guide screen containing advertisements related to a particular channel (upper screen) and how selection of such an advertisement may direct the program guide to present a program guide screen containing a time-ordered list of program listings for that channel (lower screen) in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 23 is a flow chart of steps involved in presenting selectable advertisements and in taking suitable actions when such advertisements are selected using a program guide in accordance with the present invention.

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Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

An illustrative program guide system 30 in accordance with the present invention is shown in FIG. 1. Main facility 32 contains a program guide
5 database 34 for storing program guide information such as television program guide listings data, pay-per-view ordering information, television program promotional information, etc. Main facility 32 also contains an
10 advertising database 36 for storing advertising information. Information from databases 34 and 36 may be transmitted to television distribution facility 38 via communications link 40. Link 40 may be a satellite link, a telephone network link, a cable or fiber optic link, a microwave link, a combination of such links, or
15 any other suitable communications path. If it is desired to transmit video signals (e.g., for advertising and promotional videos) over link 40 in addition to data signals, a relatively high bandwidth link such as a satellite link is generally preferable
20 to a relatively low bandwidth link such as a telephone line.

Television distribution facility 38 is a facility for distributing television signals to users, such as a cable system headed, a broadcast distribution
25 facility, or a satellite television distribution facility.

The program guide information transmitted by main facility 32 to television distribution facility 38 includes television program listings data such as
30 program times, channels, titles, descriptions, etc. Transmitted program information also includes pay program data such as pricing information for individual

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The advertising information transmitted by main

5 facility 32 to television distribution facility 38
includes text, graphics, and video advertisements for
various products and services. If desired, some of the
program guide and advertising information may be
provided using data sources at facilities other than
10 main facility 32. For example, data related to pay
program order processing (e.g., billing data and the
like) may be generated by an order processing and
billing system that is separate from main facility 32
and separate from television distribution facility 38.
15 Similarly, advertising information may be generated by
an advertising facility that is separate from main
facility 32 and television distribution facility 38.

Regardless of its source, advertising information may be maintained on a server 42 within television distribution facility 38 if desired. Server 42 may be capable of handling text, graphics, and video.

Television distribution facility 38 distributes program guide and advertising information to the user television equipment 44 of multiple users via communications paths 46. User television equipment 44 may be any suitable equipment for providing television to the user that contains sufficient processing capabilities to implement an interactive television program guide. Paths 46 may be cable links, fiber optic links, satellite links, broadcast links, or other suitable link or combination of such links. Any

suitable communications scheme may be used to transmit data over paths 46, including in-band transmissions, out-of-band transmissions, digital transmissions, analog transmissions, cable transmissions, satellite
5 transmissions, over-the-air transmissions, multichannel multipoint distribution services (MMDS) transmissions, etc.

If desired, program guide data may be distributed over an out-of-band channel on paths 46 or
10 over an in-band path such as the vertical blanking interval (VBI). Advertising information may be distributed using any of a number of suitable techniques. For example, text and graphics advertisements may be distributed over an out-of-band
15 channel using an out-of-band modulator. Video advertisements may also be distributed in this way, although large quantities of video information may be more efficiently distributed using one or more digital channels on path 46. Such digital channels may also be
20 used for distributing text and graphics.

Each user has a receiver, which is typically a set-top box such as set-top box 48, but which may be other suitable television equipment such as an advanced television receiver into which circuitry similar to
25 set-top-box circuitry has been integrated or a personal computer television (PC/TV). Program guide data is distributed to set-top boxes 48 periodically. Television distribution facility 38 may also poll set-top boxes 48 periodically for certain information
30 (e.g., pay program account information or information regarding programs that have been purchased and viewed using locally-generated authorization techniques).

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5 application on the set-top box 48. Television
distribution facility 38 may contain a processor for
handling tasks associated with the distribution of
program guide and advertising information.

During use of the interactive television program guide implemented on set-top box 48, television program listings may be displayed on television 52. Each set-top box 48, videocassette recorder 50, and television 52 may be controlled by one or more remote controls 54 or any other suitable user input interface such as a wireless keyboard, mouse, trackball, dedicated set of keys, etc.

Communications paths 46 preferably have sufficient bandwidth to allow television distribution facility 38 to distribute scheduled television programming, pay programming, advertising and other promotional videos, and other video information to set-top boxes 44 in addition to non-video program guide and advertising data. Multiple television and audio

5 distribution facilities that are similar to but
separate from television distribution facility 38 using
communications paths that are separate from
communications paths 46.

Certain functions such as pay program purchasing may require set-top boxes 48 to transmit data to television distribution facility 38 over communications paths 46. If desired, such data may be transmitted over telephone lines or other separate communications paths. If functions such as these are provided using facilities separate from television distribution facility 38, some of the communications involving set-top boxes 48 may be made directly with the separate facilities.

Users may interactively order additional information, products, or services. Such orders may be satisfied by fulfillment facilities 49 and 51. If desired, orders may be transmitted directly to fulfillment facilities such as fulfillment facility 51 via links 53, which may be telephone links, the Internet, or other suitable communications links. Orders may also be transmitted to television distribution facility 38 via links 46, where the billing system of the television distribution facility may be used. After the television distribution facility 38 has processed the user's order, television distribution facility 38 may transmit the order to fulfillment facility 49 via link 55.

A number of suitable techniques may be used to distribute videos related to advertising. For example, if each path 46 includes a number of traditional analog television channels, one or more of these channels may be used to support a number of digital channels. The bandwidth of each analog channel that is used to support digital channels may support ten or more of such digital channels. If desired, videos may be provided from server 42 in a continuously looped arrangement on these digital channels. Information provided to set-top box 48 may then be used to determine which digital channels to tune to when it is time to display a desired video. Alternatively, videos may be provided on demand. With this approach, set-top box 48 and server 42 may negotiate to determine a channel on which to provide the desired video. Videos that originate from main facility 32 or a separate facility are preferably distributed to user television equipment 44 using these or other suitable techniques.

As shown in FIG. 2, the capabilities of server 42 may be provided using servers 56 located at network nodes 58. Servers such as servers 56 may be used instead of server 42 or may be used in conjunction with a server 42 located at the television distribution facility.

Graphics information for advertisements may be downloaded periodically (e.g., once per day) to set-top boxes 48 of FIG. 1 and stored locally. The graphics information may be accessed locally when needed by the program guide implemented on set-top box 48. Alternatively, graphics information may be

5 preferably downloaded periodically to set-top boxes 48 (e.g., once per day). This allows the content on the digital channels to be updated. The program guides on set-top boxes 48 may use the map to locate desired graphics information on the digital channels. Another approach involves using a server such as server 42 or servers 56 (FIG. 2) to provide the graphics information after a set-top box 48 and that server have negotiated to set up a download operation. A bitmap or other suitable set of graphics information may then be downloaded from the server to the set-top box. If desired, the server may download instructions informing the set-top box where the desired graphics information can be located on a particular digital channel. The graphics information can be updated periodically if the server that is responsible for downloading the instructions for informing the set-top box of the location of the graphics information is also updated periodically.

Text information for advertisements may be provided to set-top boxes 48 using the same paths that are used for distributing program guide data. For example, advertising data from database 36 of FIG. 1 may be provided to set-top boxes 48 using link 40, television distribution facility 38, and paths 46. The text information may be stored locally in set-top boxes 48 and updated periodically (e.g., once per day).

Text information, graphics information, and videos for advertisements may also be distributed using a combination of these techniques or any other suitable technique.

5 If desired, advertising related information (whether video, graphics, text, or a combination of video, graphics, and text) may be presented to the user based on the user's interests, as determined by the user's interactions with the program guide. This is
10 described in Knudson et al. U.S. patent application Serial No. 09/034,939, filed March 4, 1998, which is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

As shown in FIG. 3, the program guide of the
15 present invention may display a program guide screen such as by time listings screen 60 that contains advertising information in the form of panel advertisements 62 and 64. Although the advertisements depicted in FIG. 3 are shown in the context of a by
20 time program guide listings screen, advertisements may be displayed as part of any program guide screen if desired. Examples of program guide screens on which advertisements may be displayed include a menu screen, a by channel listings screen, a screen containing
25 program listings for premium channels, a pay-per-view listings screen, a screen containing programs for a particular genre of programming, a help screen, a music channel menu, a search screen, etc.

The content of advertisements 62 and 64 may
30 be cycled over a suitable time period (e.g., every few seconds) if desired. Transitions between advertisements such as advertisements 62 and 64 or

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10 drawing.

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15  button 75a takes the user to the upper panel
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25 currently being displayed. The current time and the

30 the vertical dimension) and by time (in the horizontal

television programs and may include descriptive information such as plot summaries, actors, ratings, etc.

Advertisements such as advertisements 62 and 5 64 may include text, graphics, and video information. A user may select an advertisement of interest by highlighting that advertisement using navigation keys 86 and pressing "OK" key 82 of remote control 74 (FIG. 4). The program guide may take various actions 10 when an advertisement is selected by the user. For example, the program guide may provide a screen such as screen 94 of FIG. 5 that contains text advertising information 96, graphics advertising information 98 (which may include animation), and video advertising 15 information 100. Screen 94 may also contain advertising options 102 that provide the user with further opportunities to view information, place an order, etc.

The action taken by the program guide when a 20 user selects an advertisement varies depending on the type of advertisement. For example, if the advertisement is a promotion for a television program, the program guide may provide the user with an opportunity to tune to the program (if it is currently 25 being broadcast) or to set a reminder for the program (if it is to be broadcast in the future). If the program being promoted in the advertisement is a pay-per-view program, the program guide may provide the user with an opportunity to order the program. If the 30 advertisement is a promotion for a television channel, the program guide may display program listings for that channel.

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When an advertisement is a promotion for a television program or channel, text advertising information 96 may be text describing the program or channel, graphics information may be a still image of the actors in the program or a graphic image of a logo. Video advertising information 100 may be a promotional video of the program or upcoming programming on the channel. Screen 94 may contain some or all of these different types of advertising media.

10 If the advertisement is not directly related to a television program or channel (i.e., the advertisement is a conventional advertisement), the program guide may provide the user with an opportunity to purchase the product or service being advertised.

15 The program guide may also allow the user to view more information on the product or service being advertised. In this situation, the text advertising information 96 of FIG. 5 may be a description of the product or service, the graphics advertising information 98 may be

20 an image of the product or service, and the video advertising information 102 may be a video promotion of the product or service. Advertising options 102 may allow the user to order more information or a brochure, to view a video of the product, or to request a call

25 from a salesperson, etc.

For example, if the item being advertised in an advertisement is a new truck, the program guide may provide advertising options 104 of FIG. 6. Advertising options 104 may be presented as part of screen 94, in

30 place of screen 94, or as part of the advertisement itself. Typical options related to advertising a new truck include an option 106 to request a brochure, an

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If advertisement 118 has a fixed position in program listings region 120, scrolling up or down with cursor keys 80 does not affect the position of advertisement 118, but merely moves the program listings. If the down cursor key is pressed when highlight is positioned on top of the channel 9 program listing as shown in FIG. 7, the position of advertisement 118 remains unchanged, but the program listings move up one line and highlight 112 is placed on top of the program listing for channel 10, as shown in FIG. 9.

As shown in FIGS. 11a, 11b, and 11c, an advertisement may be inserted into a program listings region dynamically, using graphics animation. In FIG. 11a, program listings region 124 contains only program listings 126. After a suitable time interval (e.g., a few seconds after the program guide presents screen 124 of FIG. 11a), the program guide may generate an

animated graphic advertisement that appears to slide into the program listings region 124 dynamically, as shown in FIG. 11b. When the animated sliding movement is complete, the program listings region 124 appears as shown in FIG. 11c, with advertisement 128 embedded in program listings 126. The animated movement shown in FIGS. 11a, 11b, and 11c is illustrative only. Any other suitable type of special effect may be used to display advertisement 128. Examples of special effects that may be used include fades, wipes, bounces, and morphs.

As shown in FIGS. 12a and 12b, the program guide may allow the user to position highlight region 138 on logos such as MSO logo 130 and program guide provider logo 132 that are not in the program listings region 136. In the arrangement shown in FIG. 12a, the user may navigate to logo 130 from advertisement 134 using an up cursor key 80. The user may navigate from logo 130 to advertisement 134 using a down cursor key 80. Navigation between logo 130 and logo 132 may be accomplished using left and right cursor keys. In the arrangement of FIG. 12b, navigation to guide provider logo 132 is also possible using the up cursor key from program listings region 136. Initially, pressing the up cursor key 80 scrolls the program listings in program listings region 136. After the user has scrolled to the first program listing in the list (e.g., channel 1), further use of the up cursor key 80 causes highlight region 138 to be repositioned from the channel 1 program listing to logo 132, as shown in FIG. 12b.

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When the user has positioned highlight 150 on one of program listings 152 in program listings region 140, subsequent use of the left and right cursor keys 80 directs the program guide to display program listings for different times. In the example of FIG. 13, pressing the right cursor key 80 directs the program guide to display program listings for 5:30 PM

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may position highlight 158 on one of the advertisements based on some other criteria, (e.g., always on the upper advertisement, always on the advertisement for which a greater fee has been paid, etc.)

5 FIG. 15 shows how the program guide may provide advertisements in the form of banner advertisements 168 and 170 positioned above and below the program listings region 172. Advertisement 170 is shown as containing video 171. FIG. 15 shows how
10 advertisements 168 and 170 and program listings region 172 may have labels 174 to assist in navigation between portions of the screen when using special navigational keys such as navigation keys 86 on remote control 74 of FIG. 4a. When the user presses navigation key 86a of
15 remote control 74, the program guide positions highlight 176 on banner advertisement 168. When the user presses navigation key 86b of remote control 74, the program guide positions highlight 176 on banner advertisement 170. When the user presses navigation
20 key 86c of remote control 74, the program guide positions highlight 174 on one of the program listings in program listings region 172 (e.g., the uppermost program listing or the most recently highlighted program listing). If desired, numeric keys may be used
25 as the special navigation keys, rather than dedicated keys 86a, 86b and 86c.

FIG. 16 shows how the program guide may allow the user to navigate to banner advertisements such as banner advertisements 178 and 180 from program listings
30 region 182 without the use of navigation keys such as dedicated navigation keys 86a, 86b, and 86c of remote control 74 (FIG. 4a). With the arrangement illustrated

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5 activation of down cursor key 80 directs the program
guide to reposition highlight region 184 on lower
banner advertisement 180, as illustrated in the middle
screen of FIG. 16, rather than immediately scrolling
the program listings in program listings region 182.

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The user may navigate to upper banner advertisement 178 using the up cursor key 80. When the user has positioned highlight 184 on the uppermost program listing in program listings region 182, subsequent activation of up cursor key 80 directs the program guide to reposition highlight region 184 on upper banner advertisement 178. Activation of up cursor key 80 when highlight region 184 is positioned on advertisement 178 directs the program guide to display the previous page of program listings in program listings region 182, while repositioning highlight region 184 on banner advertisement 180. The user may then activate up cursor 80 to position highlight 184 on a desired listing.

Advertisements may be used to promote any desired type of product or service. When

advertisements are used to promote television programs,
the program guide may allow the selection of an
advertisement to provide access to program guide
features that might otherwise be accessed by selecting
5 a program listing from a program guide screen.

Features that may be accessed in this way include
viewing (tuning to) a program, recording a program,
setting a reminder for a program, etc. This allows
advertisements to be used to promote programs, thereby
10 generating revenue and increasing the user's awareness
of the availability of the advertised programs, while
continuing to provide the user with the same program
guide features with which the user is most familiar.

For example, if the user selects
15 advertisement 186 of FIG. 17 for the program "ER," the
program guide may present screen 188 of FIG. 18, which
contains a program description 190 for an episode of
ER, advertisements 192 and 194, and program options
196. Program options 196 include "exit" (to exit
20 screen 188), "view" (to tune to the channel for ER),
and "record" (to instruct the program guide implemented
in set-top box 48 to direct videocassette recorder 50
to record ER). Other options may be accessed by using
left and right cursor keys 80, as indicated by arrows
25 198.

The program options that may be provided
depend on the type of program being advertised in the
selected advertisement. For example, if a selected
advertisement is for a future program, the program
30 guide might provide the user with an opportunity to set
a reminder for the program. As shown in FIG. 19, if an
advertisement for a pay-per-view program is selected,

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If the user selects advertisement 214 of FIG. 20, the user is presented with screen 222. Because the program "Volcano" that is the subject of advertisement 214 is a pay-per-view program, selecting advertisement 214 directs the program guide to display pay-per-view program options 224 as part of pay-per-view description box 226. Program options 224 include options to buy the program Volcano (e.g., by impulse ordering or by calling a certain telephone number), to record the program, or to cancel the presentation of box 226 and options 224. Box 226 may also include information 230 on the channel and airtimes of the program of interest. With the arrangement of screen 222, the uppermost program listing from program listings region 218 of

5 available if the user selects "cancel."

10 view program, selecting advertisement 216 directs the
program guide to display program options 234 as part of
description box 236. Program options 234 include
options to set a reminder for the program (so that the
program guide will generate a reminder message when the
15 program is about to be aired), to record the program,
or to cancel. With the arrangement of screen 232, the
uppermost program listing from program listings region
218 of screen 213 (i.e., the program listing 238 for
the program "Andy Griffith") is still displayed. This
20 provides the user with a visual cue that the program
listings of program listings region 218 are still
available if the user selects "cancel."

25 program options are displayed on the lower portion of
the screen, so that upper banner advertisement 214 is
not blocked. Logos 240 and 242 may be displayed on
screens 213, 222, and 232. The current time and
channel to which set-top box 48 is tuned may be
30 displayed simultaneously or periodically (e.g.,
alternating every few seconds) in region 244. The

As shown in FIG. 21, the program guide may automatically position embedded advertisements such as embedded advertisement 248 immediately adjacent to the program listings for the channel (e.g., channel 1) that the embedded advertisement is promoting. For example, advertisement 248 may contain text and graphics that promote program "X" on channel 1. Advertisement 248 is immediately adjacent to program listing 252 for channel 1. The content of the embedded advertisement need not be directly related to the promotion of the adjacent program, but may be related to the adjacent program in some other way. For example, an embedded advertisement for football souvenirs may be placed immediately adjacent to the program listing for a football game. If desired, the program guide may provide the user with an opportunity to purchase an advertised product by selecting such an advertisement. Because advertisements such as advertisement 248 may contain colorful text, graphics (including animation), and video that attract the user's attention to the subject of the advertisement, placing such advertisements adjacent to their associated program listings may increase the user's interest in the program listings. Embedded advertisements may be repositioned with the program listings (e.g., during scrolling or paging of the program listings by the user), so that they remain immediately adjacent to their associated program listings.

If the embedded advertisement is for a program, users who are attracted to the advertisement

does not have to scroll through the listings
(potentially for many pages) to locate the program
listings for the program being promoted. This provides
the user with a simple visual indication of the
5 association between, e.g., the channel 1 program
listing and the adjacent embedded advertisement. It
also provides the user with access to both the original
program listing for the program and the advertisement.
Because the content of the description and the options
10 that are available may differ between the program
listing and the advertisement, access to both the
program listings and the advertisement provides the
user with more options.

Moreover, users who are interested in certain
15 program listings often revisit those program listings.
The advertising space adjacent to such program listings
may therefore be desirable for certain advertisers.
Routinely positioning embedded advertisements
immediately adjacent to associated program listings,
20 may increase the value of such embedded advertisements
to advertisers.

As shown in FIG. 22, advertisements may be
related to a particular channel (e.g., the channel
"HBO"). If the user selects HBO advertisement 252 of
25 screen 254, the program guide may present a screen such
as screen 256. Screen 256 contains an advertisement
258 that is related to HBO. Advertisement 258 is shown
as containing a graphic image 260, but may contain any
suitable combination of text, graphics (including
30 animation), and video. Program listings region 262
contains a time-ordered list of programs scheduled to
appear on HBO. Highlight 264 in screen 256 is

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positioned on top of a menu option 266 for the channel "HBO." The user can navigate to menu option 268 (for the channel "SHO") and menu option 270 (for the channel "TBS") using left and right cursor keys 80. Additional
5 channels can be accessed by further use of the left and right cursor keys 80, as indicated by arrows 272. The current time 274 and logos 276 may be displayed on both screens 254 and 256.

FIG. 23 is a flow chart of illustrative
10 actions that may be taken by the program guide when the user selects an advertisement. At step 278, the program guide displays a selectable advertisement as part of a suitable program guide screen. At step 280, the user may use a remote control such as remote
15 control 74 of FIG. 4a to select a desired advertisement. Selecting an advertisement involves navigating to the advertisement by positioning a highlight on the advertisement with cursor keys 80 and activating a select or "OK" key 82. Any suitable type
20 of highlight may be used to highlight the advertisement, including highlights based on changes in color, shading, outlines, etc.

The type of action that the program guide takes next depends on the type of advertisement
25 selected by the user. Actions that may be taken include: tuning to a channel (step 282), setting a reminder for a program (step 284), recording a program (step 286), arranging for the purchase of a pay-per-view program (step 288), arranging for the purchase of
30 a video-on-demand (VOD) program (step 290), displaying program listings (step 292), displaying additional information (step 294), processing an inquiry for

additional information such as a brochure request, etc. (step 296), and arranging for the purchase of goods or services (step 298). The program guide may perform these steps separately or in any suitable combination.

- 5 The foregoing is merely illustrative of the principles of this invention and various modifications can be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention.

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